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# LALITAGIRI UDAYAGIRI & RATNAGIRI

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THE MAHABODHI SOCIETY, ORISSA  
CUTTACK—2

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NEW CAPITAL  
BHUBANESWAR

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CHIEF MINISTER  
ORISSA



BHUBANESWAR,

The 29th October, 1957.

Who can believe it today that at one time Orissa was the citadel of that faith and culture which moved the entire humanity of the world and brought to India the credit of having been the fountain of truth and non-violence as means of settling human affairs. That is what is known in history as the Buddhist period. Buddhism is no longer there as a separate faith but it has been absorbed into the very life of the nation. The magnificent temples which the State of Orissa abounds in have successfully screened the fact that it is the magnificent Buddhist monuments which were their predecessors and for which Orissa at one time was known to the world. Exploration of Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri throws a ray of light in that glorious period of history which is now hidden in the darkness of oblivion. I congratulate the Mahabodhi Society of Orissa on the Brochure which they have brought out on the ruins of Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri. Time is coming when these places will be considered as sacred as Bhubaneswar, Puri or Konarak. Let me hope that this Brochure is the precursor of that period to come.

*H. Mahtab*

(H. Mahtab)



L. PANIGRAHI

MINISTER

HOME, LAW AND EDUCATION  
ORISSA



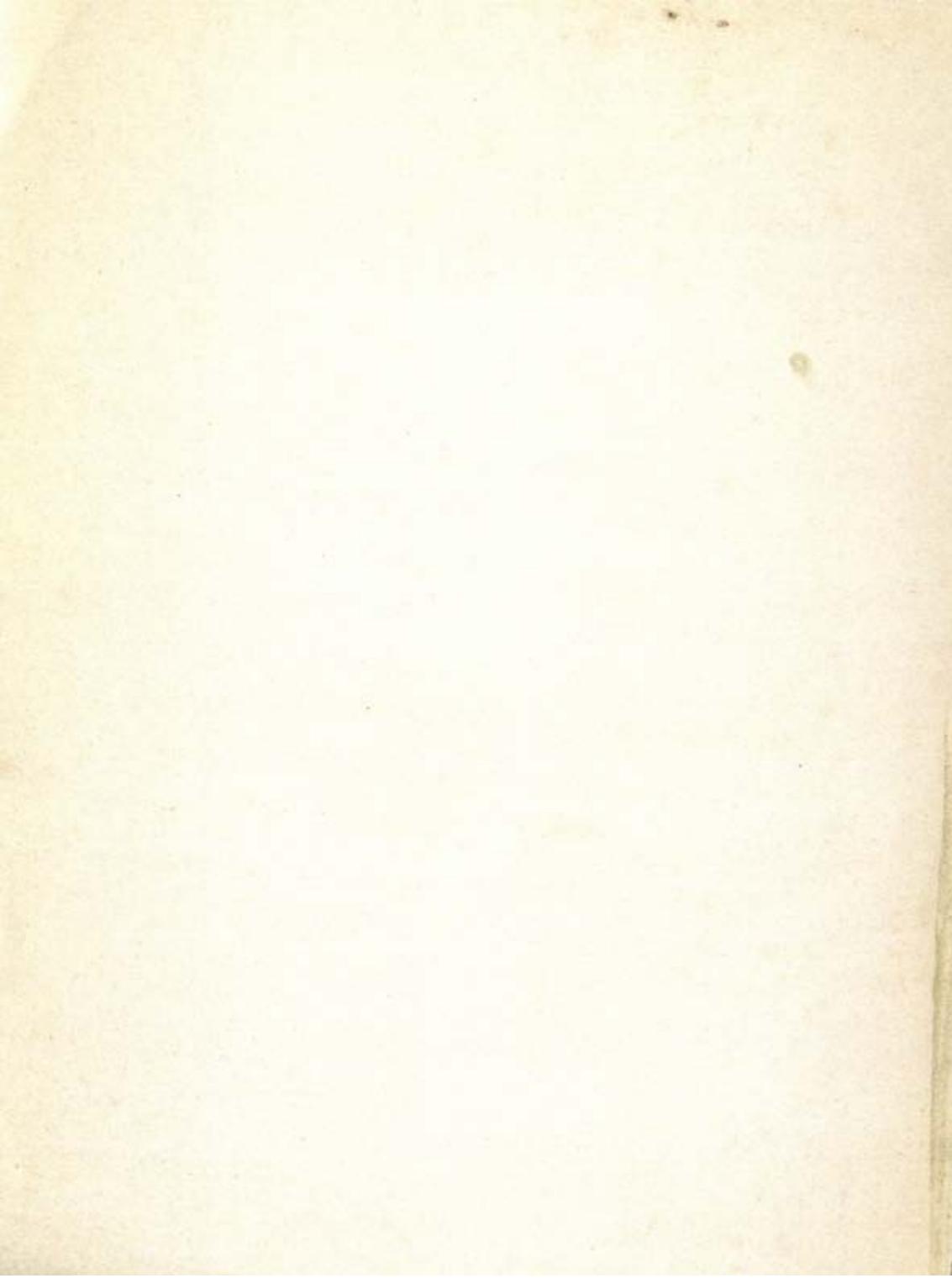
NEW CAPITAL  
BHUBANESWAR

The 13. 9. 1957.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this little brochure to the general public of Orissa and outside. The beauty and the excellence of the designs speak for themselves. It is to be hoped that those who take interest in the ancient archaeological remains of Orissa will appreciate not only the splendour of a by-gone age but also the deep religious significance of what Time has left for us to see.

*L. Panigrahi*

13. 9. 57.



## LALITAGIRI, UDAYAGIRI AND RATNAGIRI

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Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri are isolated hills of the Assia range in the Cuttack District. Udayagiri is the easternmost hill and is separated from Ratnagiri, which is at a distance of about five miles, by the river Kelua. Lalitagiri is situated at a distance of about eight miles beyond the river Birupa.

Lalitagiri and Udayagiri were seats of a University establishment, known as Pushpagiri, whose fame spread far and wide. To this University trudged a Chinese pilgrim, thirteen hundred years ago, in quest of knowledge. Hiuen-T'sang in his itinerary states that he visited Wu-cha (Odra) and found that most of the people of that country professed Mahāyāna Buddhism. There were about one hundred monasteries in the country. "In the South-west of the country was the Pu-sie-p'o-kili monastery in a mountain; the stone *Stūpa* of this monastery exhibited supernatural lights. To the north-east of this *Stūpa* in a hill monastery was another *Stūpa* like the preceding".

The extensiveness of the remains and the topographical features support the hypothesis that the two *Stūpas* in the two hill-monasteries, mentioned by Hiuen-T'sang, were situated

on the Lalitagiri and Udayagiri hills. The Lalitagiri hill is distinctly visible from the top of the Udayagiri hill. The Chinese pilgrim refers to two *Stūpas* but is silent about sculpture which probably did not thrive at Pushpagiri during that period.

Hiuen-T'sang writes that in the south-east of the country was the city of Chelitalo, near the shore of the ocean. Outside this city, there were five monasteries. This city appears to have been situated near Ratnagiri, though there is no definite evidence to corroborate the assumption. The sea, which is now at a distance of about 40 miles from Ratnagiri, was much nearer when the Chinese pilgrim visited Pushpagiri.

The Geologists are of opinion that at no very remote date, the water of the Bay of Bengal dashed against the gneiss hills which rise from the alluvial plain of the coast of Orissa.<sup>1</sup>

According to tradition the sea, at one time, laved the foot of the Udayagiri hill.<sup>2</sup>

Under the patronage of the early Kara kings, the monasteries of Pushpagiri became great centres of learning. Thither went Prajñā, a monk, after completing his educational courses at Nālandā, to study Yoga philosophy in which the Pushpagiri University specialized. He was sent by king Śubhakara to

1. The *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India* Vol. I : Blandford and Theobald. "From this alluvial plain" they write, "a quantity of water-worn pebbles are always found, evidently the remains of an old beach".
2. "Notes on the antiquities of the Nalti, the Assia and the Mahavinayak hills of Cuttack" C. S. Banerjee : J.A.S.B. Vol. XXXIX

China in 795 A.D. to present a treatise on *Gandavyuha* to the Chinese emperor Te-Tsong.<sup>3</sup>

This episode proves cultural contact between China and Orissa. Evidently, there were people in China who could read a Sanskrit text on Buddhism. The mission of Prajñā indicates that the fame of Pushpagiri had already spread to China.

Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished in Orissa in the 8th century A.D. It received a strong impetus from the Buddhist Kara kings. But Mahāyāna by that time had lost its pristine form. Orissa became a stronghold of Vajrayāna, an off-shoot of Mahāyāna. *Śunya* which is as imperishable as Vajra, was associated with a feminine aspect, corresponding to *Śakti*. Gradually a new pantheon of Buddhist deities evolved, containing five Dhyāni Buddhas, their *Śaktis* and emanations.

It was Raja Indrabhuti of Oḍḍiyāna who gave shape to the tenets of Vajrayāna, in the first half of the 8th century<sup>4</sup> A.D. Oḍḍiyāna has been identified with Orissa.<sup>5</sup>

A vigorous school of Buddhist art, under the influence of the Gupta art tradition, which was widely spread, attained a high degree of artistic excellence in Orissa in the 8th and 9th century A.D. "The Orissan artists of this period introduced not only Gupta sensuousness and sublimity, but also infused

3. 'King Subhakara of Orissa' : Sylvan Levy : *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. XV

4. *Buddhist Iconography* : B. Bhattacharya p. xxvi

5. Do p. xxvii

an element of forceful vigour and it is this rather rare combination that attaches greater importance to these sculptures".<sup>6</sup>

With the decline of Buddhism and gradual recession of the sea, the prosperity of these hills ended. The Saivite Somavamśī kings of the tenth century had little affection for Buddhism. Under their successors, Vaishnavism became the predominant faith in Orissa. With the disappearance of the maritime activities, the land routes became the sole means of communications. Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri lay off the beaten track. The monasteries were abandoned by the monks when the people of the locality lost all interest in Buddhism. The memory of Pushpagiri was forgotten and the hills were covered with dense vegetation.

In 1870, C. S. Banerjee, Sub-Divisional officer, Jajpur, visited Lalitagiri and Udayagiri, thus lifting the veil of oblivion that had lasted for several centuries. In 1875, John Beames, Magistrate of Cuttack, and about 1895 M. M. Chakravarti, Sub-Divisional officer, Jajpur visited those sites. M. M. Chakravarti also explored Ratnagiri. Their accounts<sup>7</sup> give us an idea of the condition of the remains in the last quarter of

6. 'Early Medieval sculptures of Utkala' : S. C. Chandra; O.H.R.J. Vol. III No. 2.  
The Orissan artists also imitated the Gupta technique of modelling and of harmony and proportion in execution. The following features of early Orissan Buddhist school distinguish it from the contemporary school of Gupta art: utmost severity of the conception of the main image, virtual absence of any clear indication of drapery, austere simplicity of figures contrasted by decorative background, and erectness of posture. Many of the figures are provided with pedestals of double rows of petals upon which the deities sit or stand upright.
7. 'Notes on the antiquities of the Nalti, the Assia and the Mahavinayaka hills of Cuttack' : C. S. Banerjee; J.A.S.B. Vol. XXXIX  
'The Altis hills in Cuttack' : J. Beames J.A.S.B. Vol. XLIV.  
*Cuttack District Gazetteer* 1906.

the 19th century. The visits of these Government officers gave publicity to the sculptures which these hills contained. Some zamindar-owners of these hills removed beautiful images, to Mahanga and Kendrapara to decorate their houses or temples, from the ruins of the brick mounds.<sup>8</sup> A number of images were sold away.<sup>9</sup> A. Ghosh of Calcutta procured a few specimens of Buddhist sculptures from the Cuttack hills. Some images were taken to the Indian Museum and to the Patna Museum.

In all these hills, *Sādhus* built shrines out of materials from the neighbouring ruins, in the second half of the 19th century. According to tradition, one Vasukalpa Keśari built his palace on the Lalitagiri hill. The monuments of Ratnagiri are also ascribed to him.

## LALITAGIRI

Lalitagiri or Naltigiri is situated at a distance of about 30 miles from Cuttack. It has been proposed to construct a direct road from Lalitagiri to Gopālpur on the Birupā, a distance of about 5 miles. The Lalitagiri hill contains three spurs, Olāshuni, Lanḍā and Pārābhāḍi. The Lanḍā and Pārābhāḍi hills are covered with ancient brick mounds.

8. "The temples and the monasteries on the Naltigiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri hills were made of bricks and the only stones used were the door frames, the columns and the images installed in the niches" *Exploration in Orissa* : R. P. Chanda p. 14.
9. The seated image of Buddha at Lalitagiri, which is the most commanding figure of that hill, was sold for rupees one hundred in 1927 by the local zamindar. But the purchaser took back his money as he could not remove the colossal image away from the site.

On the terrace of the Pārābhādi peak, there is a figure of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi in a very damaged condition, which is made a goddess and called Ghantiāśuni by the villagers. On the top, there is a terraced stone platform, which according to tradition was the court of Vasukalpa Raja. Three circular layers of stones forming the base of a *Stūpa* existed in the last quarter of the 19th century.

About 500 feet below, there is a long shelf cut out of the hill side, known as 'Hāti Khāl'. Probably at one time it was known as 'Hāti Khol' or cave for the elephants. The shrine, built on the side of the hill, contained a gallery of life-size images of Bodhisattvas. The roof of the shrine has disappeared and the images are now much weathered and covered with moss and lichen. Three of them still stand in a line partially buried in debris (fig. 1). A mutilated image, which once belonged to the gallery, is now lying on the ground at some distance. Near by, there was a richly carved pedestal, which C. S. Banerjee saw, ornamented with couchant lions with a lotus in the middle, on which stood a mutilated deity. There is no trace of the pedestal now.

On the pass between the Laṇḍā and Pārābhādi hills there was another Buddhist sanctuary, consisting of a cell and a porch. After the collapse of the sanctuary, a temple of 'Garh Vāśuli', was constructed on the foundation of the old structure. The shrine was surmounted by a small pyramidal tower which has now disappeared. The niches in the interior walls of the cell contained five images of Padmapāṇi, each holding a lotus

with a long stem in the left hand.<sup>10</sup> These figures, cut in bold relief, are about five ft. in height. Four of the figures are taken out from the niches and fixed in two walls of the porch, which is now in ruins (figs. 2 & 3).

The northern half of the Lañdā hill slopes towards the base of the Pārābhādi hill and is covered with extensive remains of ancient brick structures. The ruins of brick mounds, exhumed from time to time by the villagers have yielded splendid images. Many of these images have been disfigured by vermilion paste. The villagers also quarry for stones, and the pits have revealed the existence of images under ground.

On the terrace of the Lañdā hill, there was a dilapidated stone structure of a Buddhist shrine. A door jamb, depicting a figure of Avalokiteśvara in relief, was to be seen in the last quarter of the 19th century. There were a few images near the stone structure, which evidently belonged to the shrine. The stone structure has disappeared and among the images, a standing image of Vajrapāṇi, is the sole survivor (fig. 4).

Higher up, the ground has been levelled, and there are remains of an ancient monastery. Two rectangular brick mounds were visible representing the ruins of two courts of an ancient monastery. The upper one had a porch of which the basement still exists. At its corners stood portions of two monolithic pillars seven to eight feet in height. Nothing

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10. Padmapāṇi is the divine Bodhisattva (would-be Buddha) of Amitābha of whom Avaloki-teśvara is an emanation. With one hand Padmapāṇi carries the stem of a lotus. With the other hand he displays the *Varada Mudra* or the gift bestowing attitude.

now remains *in situ* except the basement over which was built a temple, which, however, was not completed.

Still higher up, on the top of the hill, there is a rectangular enclosure, composed of rubbles and stones, which, according to tradition was the palace of Vasukalpa Raja, but was really a *Stupa* like the elevated platform on the top of the Pārābhādi hill.

About 1890, a *Sādhu* settled on the level ground near the top of the Landā hill. He exhumed a colossal seated image of Buddha in *Bhūmisparsa Mudrā* (attitude of touching the earth) from the debris. He also unearthed images of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā from the ruins of the mounds.<sup>11</sup> The *Sādhu* became clever from experience when the images were taken away by the zamindars. He began the construction of a temple and fixed the images, subsequently found, in the outer walls of the temple to prevent removal. This temple was probably intended to house the 'Hinduized' image of Buddha, who is called Mahādeva by the villagers. Unfortunately the *Sādhu* could not complete the construction of the temple. Death perhaps cut short his activities.

The image of Buddha, seated in *Padmāsana* pose under a Banyan tree, is one of the finest specimens of early Orissan sculpture (fig. 7A). The ear lobes are unusually long and grace-

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11. It is said that Ramagovinda Jagadeb, zamindar of Kendrapara, took away the image of Tārā and the zamindar of Mahanga removed the image of Avalokitesvara to Mahanga. The four-armed image of Tārā was subsequently taken from Kendrapara to the Indian Museum (fig. 5) The Avalokitesvara image at Mahanga is about eight feet in height (fig. 6). The zamindar intended to instal it in his temple at Mahanga.

fully curved. The sculptor has wonderfully succeeded in reflecting the inner meditation in the delicately chiselled face of the image. (fig. 7B)

A visitor to-day will be grateful to the *Sādhu* for giving accommodation to a number of images in the niches of the walls of his temple. The unfinished temple contains a portion of a beautifully carved doorway, which evidently belonged to the monastery (fig. 8). The image of two-armed Avalokiteśvara,<sup>12</sup> fixed on the left of the door frame, measures four feet eight inches in height (fig. 9). The Buddhist formula *Ye dharma hetu prabhavā* has been inscribed on its halo in the characters of the eighth century A.D. To the right of the door frame, there is a four-armed image of Tārā holding Vajra in her left upper hand (fig. 10). It measures about six feet in height. A superb image of Maitreya<sup>13</sup> in good state of preservation is also to be seen in one of the niches of an outer wall (fig. 11). The image is about eight feet in height. An image of Aparājitā Tārā<sup>14</sup> standing on two crouching figures, measures more than five feet in height (figs. 12 A & B). A two-armed Manjuśri<sup>15</sup> about seven feet in height also belongs to the collection (fig. 13).

- 12. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara emanates from Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha and his Shakti Pandara. The image bears a figure of Amitābha on the crown. Lokesvara or Avalokitesvara is the embodiment of compassion.
- 13. Maitreya is the future Buddha. He holds in his right hand a stalk of lotus and bears a small *Chaitya* on his crown.
- 14. Aparājitā tramples over Ganesha. Her right hand is raised in displaying the attitude of giving a blow.
- 15. Manjusri is the god of learning. He carries a sword and a book in his hands. An image of Manjusri, about seven feet in height, was removed to Kendrapara and subsequently acquired for the Indian Museum (fig. 14).

Surface excavation near the temple will undoubtedly unearth more images.

In the village at the foot of the hill, there is a seated image of Buddha under a tree, being worshipped as a village deity. The Buddhist creed has been inscribed on its back. An image of Tārā holding a lotus is to be seen near a big rock (fig. 15).

## UDAYAGIRI

The Udayagiri hill is situated about three miles south-west of Gopālpur on the Birupā. The hill contains two spurs, forming a bay of sloping terrace which is covered with extensive remains. At the foot of the hill there stood an elaborately carved colossal image of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi holding a large lotus in the left hand. The nose and the right hand were broken. The figure bears an inscription in the characters of the eighth century A.D., recording the name of the donor Keśava Gupta, a monk. It was carved out of a single slab of chlorite and was more than seven feet in height. A part of the lower portion of the image was covered by the debris of a mound. The image was standing even twenty years ago. The upper portion of the image, now broken into two parts, is now lying on the ground (figs. 16 A & B).

There is a rock-cut well at Udayagiri at the base of the terrace of the hill. C. S. Banerjee, in 1870, described the well as follows :

"It is 23 feet square, cut 28 feet deep from the top of the rock to the water's edge, surrounded by a stone terrace, 94 feet

6 inches long and 38 feet 11 inches broad. The entrance to the terrace is guarded by two monolithic pillars, the tops of which are broken. The edge of the well and the extremity of the terrace are lined with battlements of large blocks of wrought stones, rounded on the top and three feet in height, leaving a wide passage or walk behind. The well is situated towards the southern extremity of the terrace. From the north and in the middle of the terrace, a few yards off the entrance, a flight of steps (3 feet in breadth and 31 in number) runs down the rock as an approach to the water. The rock between the lowest steps and the well has been cut into an arch and on its face, there is an inscription".<sup>16</sup>

The inscription records that the well was dedicated by Rañaka Vajranāga.

About 50 ft. higher up the well, there is a platform upon which once stood a shrine of Buddha. In 1870, a number of images lay scattered about on and around the platform. Close beside the enclosure of the well, a *Sādhu* built a *Math*, out of materials from the neighbouring ruins. The most noticeable among his collection was an image of four-armed Jaṭāmukuta Lokesvara about 5 feet in height, bearing an inscription recording the formula of the Buddhist creed, *ye-dharma* etc. Beames removed this image to Cuttack. The *Math* still exists, though nothing now remains of the collection of the *Sādhu*.

Higher up, there are remains of a shrine consisting of a cell and a porch. The cell, about 9 ft. square, contains a colossal

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16. C. S. Banerjee : *op. cit.*

image of seated Buddha (fig. 17A). The roof of the cell collapsed almost burying the image. About 30 years ago the image was fully excavated (fig. 17B) but the mud carried down by the rains into the cell, has again partly covered the image. There were four rectangular pillars, 7 to 8 feet in height, which must have at one time supported the roof of the porch, in front of the cell. These pillars which were standing in the last quarter of the 19th century, now lie buried in the earth, thus blocking the entrance to the cell. There was a magnificent doorway with elaborate carvings in front of the sanctum (fig. 18). This was removed by Beames to Cuttack and an ugly ditch marks the spot where the gateway stood.<sup>17</sup> The lintel of the door frame which was lying on the ground has now disappeared. The image of Buddha seated in the attitude of touching the earth is made of three pieces of bluish chlorite stone and is 5 ft. 6 inches in height.

In the southern part of the terrace, at some height from the base, there is a temple of Mahākāli. From a ruined brick mound near this temple, an image of Vaiśravaṇa<sup>18</sup> was dug out and subsequently removed to the Indian Museum (fig. 22). A little higher up the terrace, stands a four-armed image of Avalokitesvara, covered with lichen. The legs of the image

17. Beames removed the gateway and the following sculptures to Cuttack: (1) an image of Jatāmukuta Lokesvara (fig. 19), a seated image, probably of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha (fig. 20) a figure of Gangā in relief, carved on a door Jamb (fig. 21) and a figure of Prajnāpāramitā. The first two images are now kept in a temple near the compound of the Ravenshaw College. The figure of Gangā and probably that of Prajnāpāramitā were removed to the Patna Museum. Beames desired that the doorway, after its removal to Cuttack, "will be erected in the Public Garden and taken care of". A figure of Yamunā in relief is now kept inside the temple of Mahakali at Udayagiri.

18. Vaisravana is a Yaksha attendant of Jambhala, the god of wealth.

are broken (fig. 23). On the back of the image, there is a long inscription of 25 lines in the nail-headed characters of the eighth century A.D. The inscription refers to the construction of a *Stūpa*. After invoking Tārā, Padmasambhava and other deities, it states that a *Tathāgatādhishthita Dhātugarbha Stūpa* containing a relic, was set up on the spot. The ruins of a *Stūpa* are visible near the image.<sup>19</sup>

Near by, there is a fine four-armed image of Padmapāṇi, buried upto the knee, which might have belonged to the *Stūpa* (fig. 24).

The northern part of the terrace was covered with extensive remains of *Stūpas*. Most of these brick mounds have now disappeared though a few are still hidden in the jungle. Some mounds were destroyed by villagers who took away the images. Fortunately, a large brick mound representing a *Stūpa* escaped destruction owing to the popular belief that it is cursed. The local people call it '*Dhāna Kāṇḍī*' or granary of paddy. The niches on four sides of this *Stūpa* contain four images of Buddha.<sup>20</sup> The head of an image of Buddha is visible on the western side of the *Stūpa* (fig. 25). On the eastern side of the *Stūpa* there is a superb image of Buddha touching the earth, attended by two figures. The extreme severity of the back slab is relieved by a pair of hovering Gandharvas who flank the plain oval halo round Buddha's head (fig. 26).

19. "A great site of Mahayana Buddhism in Orissa" : H. C. Chakladar *Modern Review* August 1928.

20. The Dhyāni or celestial Buddhas "are generally represented on four sides of a *Stupa*, which is the symbol of the Buddhist Universe, facing the four cardinal points".  
The *Buddhist Iconography* : B. Bhattacharya p. 3.

Two Bodhisattva images in damaged condition are seen in the northern part of the terrace of the hill (fig. 27 & fig. 28). Close by, a level spot is strewn with fragments of carved stones, and images in varying degrees of deterioration.

The terrace of the Udayagiri hill gently slopes down from a height of about 150 feet to the level of the plain. The terrace is surrounded like an amphitheatre by a semi-circle of jagged rocks with an opening towards the east. There is a dried-up tank, called 'Pushpa Pokhri', at a distance of about 100 yards from the base of the hill.

Near the top of the western spur of hill, overlooking the Birupa, there is a gallery of figures, carved out of the rock, by the side of a cave. There is a votive *Stūpa* in front of the figures. On the extreme left, there is a standing image of Bodhisattva, with the *Ye dharma* formula inscribed behind it. There is also another inscription stating that the image was the gift of Simyaka (*Deodharmoyam Simyakasya*) (fig. 29). The gallery contains two more standing Bodhisattva figures (fig. 30) and two seated figures. One of them is a Buddhist goddess (fig. 31). But the principal object of attention is the other figure, probably of Avalokiteśvara (fig. 32). The god is seated in *ardha-padmāsana* with right foot hanging down. He is called 'Sola pua Mā' or Mother of 16 sons, because he is attended by 13 figures, cut in low relief. The rock-cut figures are worshipped by the villagers for the fulfilment of their vows and are painted with repeated layers of turmeric and vermillion.

## RATNAGIRI

The hill is situated about four miles to the east of Gopālpur on the Birupā and stands on a stream named Keluā, a tributary of the Birupā. Unlike the Udayagiri and Lalitagiri hills, the Ratnagiri has a flat top which is covered with extensive remains. There is an old temple of Mahākāla on the top of the hill. The upper portion of the spire of the temple collapsed and large trees took root in the walls of the temple. A family of priests settled on the slope of the hill and repaired the temple to some extent. Some images and two carved pillars are kept within the temple precincts.

Sixty years ago, there was a rough enclosure wall to the south of the temple, formed of large blocks of broken images.

A *Sādhu* established his *Ashram* within the enclosure. To the west of that enclosure, there was a rectangular platform, the centre of which was occupied by a circular mound, evidently the remains of a brick *Stupa*, with four smaller attendant *Stupas* at the corners of the enclosure. To the north of the temple of Mahākāla, was another rectangular platform, consisting of the ruins of a Buddhist sanctuary. To the east of the latter and on a lower level was a row of miniature votive *Stupas* arranged in a rectangular form. Further to the east, images of Padmapāṇi and other Buddhist deities remained partially buried in the debris or hidden in the jungle. Below this spot, to the east of the temple of Mahākāla, the plateau slopes down to another level spot which was covered with ancient brick

mounds in ruins. Two large images of Padmapāni were exhumed from the debris.

Carved stones and stone walls, a few yards below, indicated the ruins of a Buddhist shrine, from which some images were removed. Two superb seated images, one of Lokanāth and another of Avalokiteśvara (figs. 33 & 34) were taken to the Indian Museum. Lokanāth sits on double lotus with his right feet hanging down. Avalokiteśvara wears necklaces and armlets. Curling tresses of hair fall on his shoulders. An image of Khadiravani Tārā<sup>21</sup> was probably removed from this site to the Patna Museum (fig. 35).

About 200 feet north of the ruins of the shrine, there was a rectangular mass of debris. Stone walls were traceable on all the four sides of the rectangular mass, inside of which were the remains of an ancient court yard. This high rectangular mound in all probability represented the ruins of the largest monastery of the Ratnagiri hill.

We now go back to the top of the hill. Within the enclosure, to the east of the temple of Mahākāla, there was a unique image of which M. M. Chakravarti gives a fine description : "It is a colossal image with a male figure seated on a lotus and three rows of figures beneath. The head of the image is encircled with a halo from which spring two delicate leafy branches,

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21. Khadiravani Tārā is an emanation of Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi. She is identified by the presence of Marichi and Ekajata. The Patna Museum possesses another standing Tara image from Ratnagiri, known as 'Tārā and seven perils'. Various perils under which a worshipper would seek the protection of the goddess are depicted on the back slab (fig. 36).

below which are dots ending in two ducks finely carved. On either sides are the figures of armed men mounted on lions kneeling on elephants. The whole image has been cut from a solid slab of gneiss".<sup>22</sup> There is now no trace of that image.

Two colossal heads of Buddha were dug out of the mound on the highest part of the hill and kept within the enclosure. The bigger one, measuring 3 feet 8 inches in height, was taken to the foot of the hill up to the bank of the Kelua and deposited there (fig. 37). The other Buddha head is kept under a spreading banyan tree on the top of the hill (figs. 38 A. & B.). "The immobile serenity of the countenance, the exquisitely full eyes, the elegant lips, make the Buddha head one of the wonders of Indian art".<sup>23</sup>

Two mutilated slabs containing inscriptions have been found at Ratnagiri. One of these, "which may be assigned to the 6th century on paleographic grounds" was taken to the Indian Museum. The Mahabodhi Society, Orissa, has presented the other slab to the State Museum at Bhubaneswar. Its inscription contains the words 'Bodhi' and 'Mahabodhi'.

In the nineties of the last century, the hill top was full of carved stones depicting foliage and fragments of sculptures

22. The Cuttack District Gazetteer, 1906 p. 23.

23. "We are unconsciously reminded of the inspiring Dhyāni Buddhas of Barabudur, Java, as we look at the massive grandeur, round smoothness, harmonious rhythm and deep spiritual abstraction of this intriguing head".

"The Relation between the Buddha images of Orissa and Java": *Modern Review* November 1933.

containing arabesque designs. There were a number of brick mounds in ruins indicating *Stupas*.

Most of these brick mounds have disappeared during the last 50 years. The enclosure near the temple of Mahākāla is gone. A considerable number of miniature votive *Stupas* lie scattered about on the top of the hill.

Some Buddhist images are now placed in a grove of large trees. The collection includes a four-armed Avalokiteśvara (fig. 39), a two-armed Heruka (fig. 40)<sup>24</sup> and a standing image of Tārā now in slanting position (fig. 41). An image of two armed Avalokiteśvara is kept under a tree at some distance (fig. 42). An image of Buddha in the earth-touching attitude has been fixed in one of the niches of the Mahākāla temple (fig. 43).

As the area round the hill is subjected to the ravages of flood almost every year, the villagers removed stones from the top of the hill to raise the plinths of their houses. Only a small portion of the stone walls of the high rectangular mound still remains, adorned by images of Tārā and Padmapāṇi (fig. 44). The *Pradakshina* (circumambulation) path, which was enclosed by walls on the four sides of the mound are still traceable. Surface excavations at different spots have revealed the existence of images (fig. 45).

The Ratnagiri sculptures, concentrated as they are, have been largely removed from the sites. The colossal image of

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24. Heruka, an emanation of Akshyobhya, dances on a corpse, wearing a garland of human heads.

Bodhisattva Padmapāni, now kept in the Sub-Divisional Officer's bungalow at Jajpur, was removed from Ratnagiri. The image is now lying on the ground on its back and measures 16 feet, without the lower portion, which is missing. A. Ghosh has procured an image of Sita Tārā<sup>25</sup> from Ratnagiri. The image of Mārichi,<sup>26</sup> now in the Indian Museum, probably belonged to Ratnagiri (fig. 46).

In the village of Ratnagiri, at the foot of the hill, mutilated Buddhist images adorn the walls of two Hindu shrines.

## EARLY MEDIEVAL ORISSAN BUDDHIST ART

The pantheon of Vajrayāna found its full exposition in the Buddhist art that flourished at Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri. Though Padmapāni, the principal Bodhisattva, and Avalokiteśvara, the emanation of Amitābha predominated, other Dhyāni Buddhas and their emanations are not forgotten. There are images of Jambhala, Khadiravani Tārā, Mārichi and Heruka. We find that Prajñāpāramitā, Manjusri, even Maitreya the future Buddha, have not been ignored.

Several images of Vajrapāṇi, the principal Bodhisattva of Akshyobhya, have been found from these hills. An image of Vajrapāṇi, about seven feet in height, from Lalitagiri is kept in the Indian Museum (fig. 47). On the head of the god

25. Sita Tārā, who is unattended by any figure, bears a wheel on her breast.

26. The goddess is three faced (one of which is that of a sow) and eight-armed. She rides on a chariot drawn by seven boars.

is a pyramidal crown made up of rhythmically arranged matted locks of hair. The god offers boon with his right hand and holds a lotus stalk with his left hand. Another image of Vajrapāṇi, probably from Lalitagiri, has been removed to Delhi. The collection of A. Ghosh contains one of the best specimens of Vajrapāṇi from Lalitagiri. Unfortunately the figure is mutilated, and the lower part of it is missing. In the opinion of R. D. Banerjee : "the expression of the face, the modelling of the torso, and the schematic arrangement of the locks of long hair over the shoulders of Vajrapani, all indicate the highest stage of the plastic art, attained in the early medieval period"<sup>27</sup> (fig. 48).

An image of Buddha in *Vajrāsana*, indicated by a hanging foliage of the Bodhi tree over the halo of the figure, was removed from Ratnagiri. It is now kept in the Bungalow of the Sub-Divisional Officer at Jajpur (fig. 49).

The earlier specimens of Lalitagiri, which are not later than the 8th century A.D., have dignified composure and austerity, which distinguish these sculptures from the later sculptures of Udayagiri and Ratnagiri, marked by sensuous softness and attention to the details. The Bodhisattva figures of the Cuttack hills evince an air of elegant grace and a rare combination of strength and delicacy. The spirit of passive contemplation reflected in the faces of the figures indicates artistic conception of a high order. "But even if the spiritual significance of these images is ignored, no connoisseur will

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27. *History of Orissa* Vol. II : R. D. Banerjee, p. 384.

hesitate to include the Bodhisattvas found on the Naltigiri among the most lovely things shaped by the hand of man".<sup>28</sup>

Orissa had, at one time, active maritime contacts with Ceylon and Java. The people of Orissa went to Ceylon, taking with them their rich art traditions.<sup>29</sup> The Buddha images of the Cuttack hills resemble in serenity and gracefulness, the images of ancient Abhayagiri Vihara at Anuradhapura (eighth-ninth century).

As a result of colonisation of Java by the people of Kalinga, a part of Java came to be known as Kalinga, in the 7th century A.D.<sup>30</sup> Orissan art undoubtedly influenced the Buddhist school of art that flourished in Java under the patronage of the Sailendra dynasty.<sup>31</sup> The Javanese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Barabudur have striking similarities with the Buddha images of Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri.

28. *Exploration in Orissa* : R. P. Chanda p. 20.

29. According to Ceylonese tradition the Tooth Relic was brought from Kalinga in the 4th century A.D. A king of Kalinga is said to have gone in the 7th century to Ceylon, where he became a monk. A Kalinga dynasty ruled semi-independently in one part of Ceylon from the eleventh century. In 1187, Nissanka Malla of the Kalinga dynasty seized the throne. He restored the shrines at Anuradhapura. *A Short History of Ceylon* : H. W. Codrington pp. 29, 35 & 65.

30. *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, Vol. II : R. C. Majumdar pp. 95 & 112.

31. The Sailendras of Java, Sumatra and Malay peninsula, "are supposed to be the Sailodbhava emigrants of Kangoda. It is likely that the Sailodbhavas being hard pressed between the Bhaumas of Utkala and the Gangas of Kalinga migrated to Malaya".

'Early Medieval Sculptures of Utkala' : S. C. Chandra. *Orissa Historical Research Journal* Vol. III No. 2.

Malaysia was called Kalinga by the foreigners (R. C. Majumdar *op cit* pp. 227 & 379).

It is difficult to discard the assumption that the Javanese Buddhas were shaped by the Buddhist sculptors, who migrated to Java from Orissa after the decadence of Buddhism.<sup>32</sup> The terrace of Udayagiri was probably borne in mind by the artists who constructed the terraced temple of Barabudur.

In 1956, the year of Buddha Jayanti, Hon'ble U Nu, probably the greatest living Buddhist Asian, visited Lalitagiri and was greatly impressed by the superb artistry of the images on the top of the Lanḍā hill.

Referring to the 'fine specimens of Buddhist art found in Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri', the Rashtrapati of India in his august Message has pointed out that these also 'should be brought to the notice of the public at a time when Buddhist art in general is receiving much attention'.<sup>33</sup>

32. Traits, such as concentration of force and typical curls of hair, "as also the peculiar types of halos round their heads, lead us to infer that the Javanese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Barabudur and Prambanam (8th-9th century A.D.) which are distinguished by the same clarity and severity of conception, the same supreme spiritual fervour, the same monumental character and the same subtle sensitive modelling, may have as their prototype, the Orissan Buddhas of the early medieval era.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that both, absolutely plain elliptical nimbus in high relief and the long tapering pointed halo, either plain or fringed with flamboyant scrolls, are typical Orissan features. Its simultaneous occurrence in Javanese works may connote some thing more than chance coincidence."

'The Relation between the Buddha images of Orissa and Java' : D. P. Ghosh  
*Modern Review* November, 1933.

33. Message for the Album, *Buddhist Sculptures and Monuments of Orissa* published by the Mahabodhi Society, Orissa.



Fig. 1. Hati Khal,  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 2. Padmapani, Vasuli temple,  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 3. Padmapani, Vasuli temple,  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 4. Vajrapani, Landa hill terrace,  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 7A. Buddha touching the earth,  
Landa hill, Lalitagiri.



Fig. 7B. Face of Buddha  
touching the earth,  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 8. Carved door frame, Landa hill  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 9. Avalokitesvara, Landa hill  
temple, Lalitagiri.



Fig. 10. Tara, Landa hill temple  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 11. Maitreya, Landa hill temple  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 12A. Aparajita Tara,  
Landa hill  
temple, Lalitagiri.



Fig. 12B. Face of Aparajita Tara  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 13. Manjusri, Landa hill temple  
Lalitagiri.



Fig. 14. Manjusri from Lalitagiri  
Indian Museum.



Fig. 15. Tara holding lotus  
Lalitagiri Village.



Fig. 16A. Padmapani at the foot of the hill  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 16B. Head of Padmapani  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 17A. Half-buried Buddha touching  
the earth, Udayagiri.



Digitized by  
Srujanika

Fig. 17B. Buddha touching the earth  
(after excavation)  
Udayagiri.

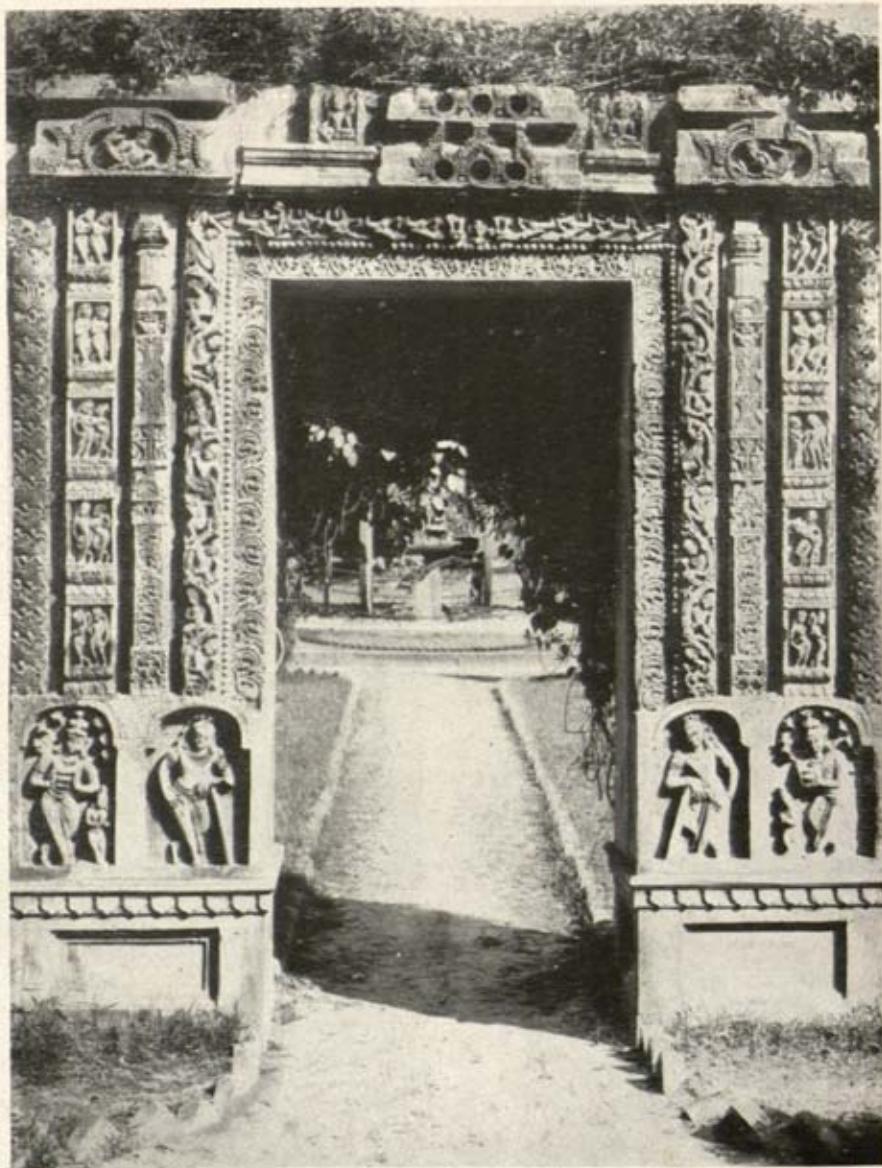


Fig. 18. Doorway from Udayagiri  
Patna Museum.



Fig. 19. Jatamukuta Lokesvara  
from Udayagiri  
Cuttack.



Fig. 20. Amitabha from Udayagiri  
Cuttack.



Fig. 21. Relief of Ganga from Udayagiri  
Patna Museum.



Fig. 22. Vaisravana from Udayagiri  
Indian Museum.



Fig. 23. Avalokitesvara  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 24. Four-armed Padmapani  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 25. Head of Buddha, Dhanakandi Mound  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 26. Buddha touching the earth,  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 27. Padmapani  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 28. Buddha in *Padmasana*  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 29. Rock-cut Bodhisattva  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 30. Rock-cut figures of Bodhisattva  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 31. Rock-cut Tara (Kurukulla ?)  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 32. Sola-Pua-Ma  
Udayagiri.



Fig. 33. Lokanath from Ratnagiri  
Indian Museum.

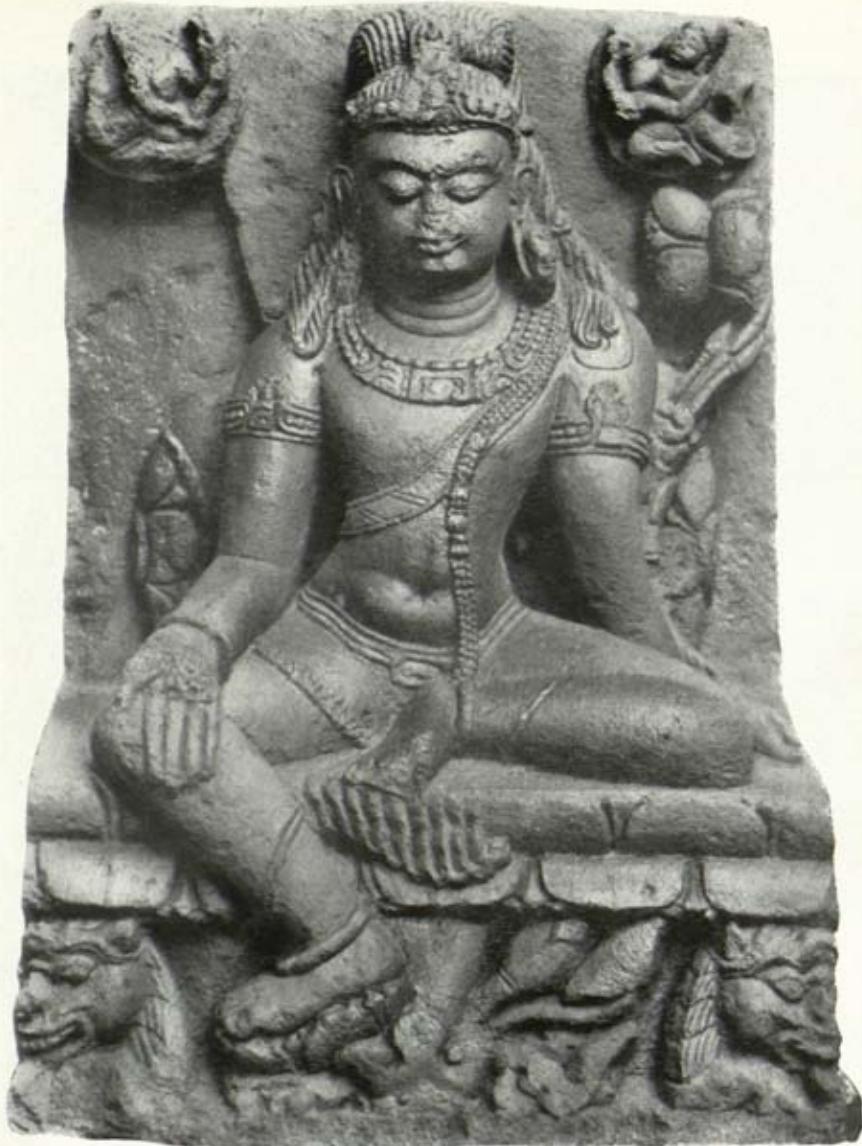


Fig. 34. Avalokitesvara from Ratnagiri  
Indian Museum.

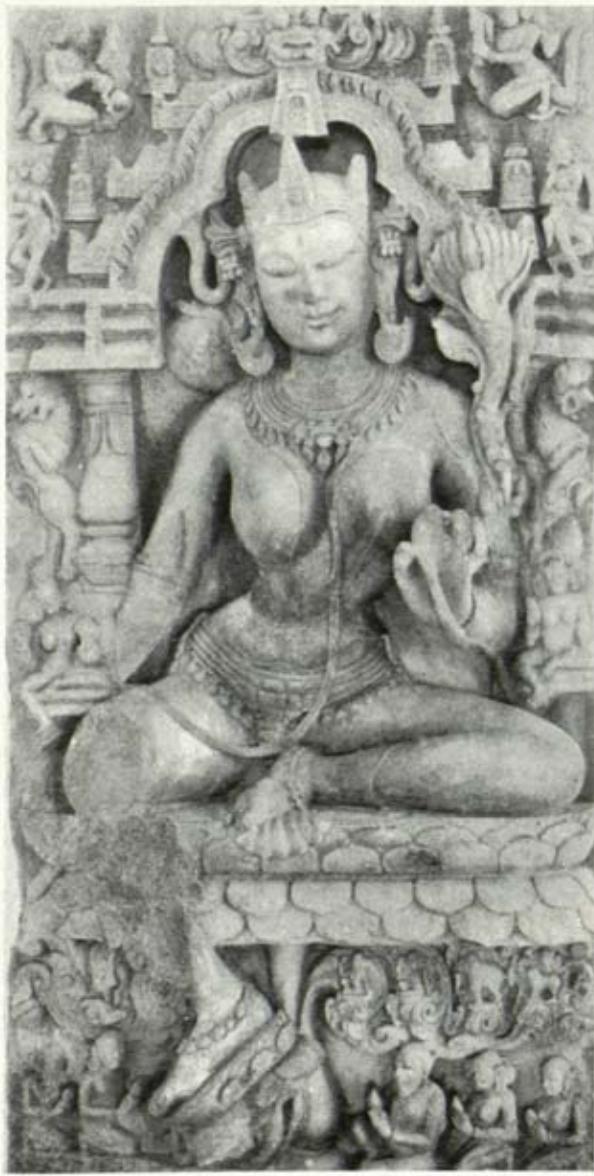


Fig. 35. Khadiravani Tara from Ratnagiri  
Patna Museum.

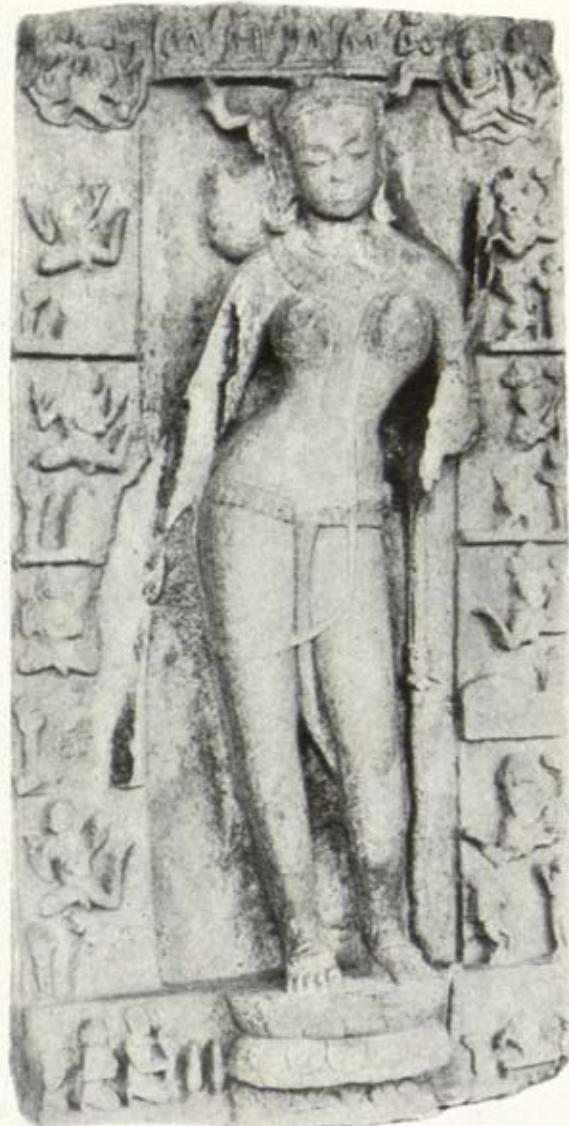


Fig. 36. Tara and Seven perils, from Ratnagiri  
Patna Museum.



Fig. 37. Head of Buddha at the foot of Ratnagiri

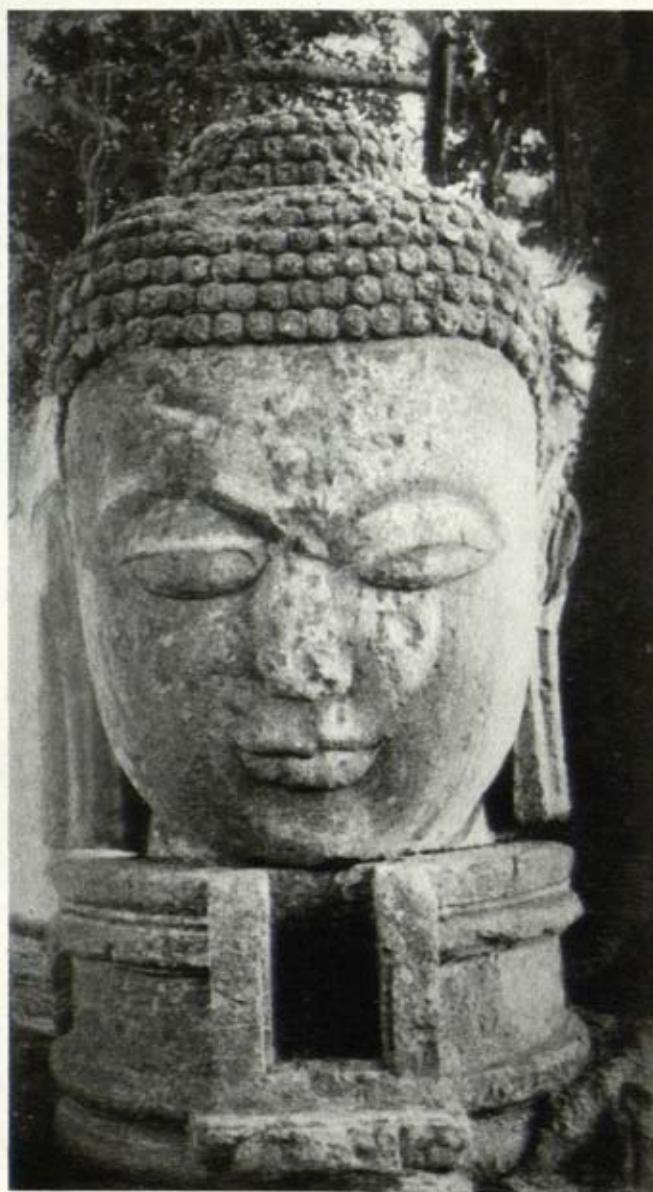


Fig. 38A. Head of Buddha on the top of Ratnagiri.



Fig. 38B. Head of Buddha and votive Stupas  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 39. Four-armed Avalokitesvara  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 40. Heruka  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 41. Tara in slanting position  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 42. Seated Avalokitesvara  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 43. Buddha touching the earth  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 44. Buddhist figures on a wall  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 45. Head of a Buddhist image  
Ratnagiri.



Fig. 46. Marichi from Ratnagiri  
Indian Museum.



Fig. 47. Vajrapani from Lalitagiri  
Indian Museum.



Fig. 48. Head of Vajrapani  
Ghosh Collection.



Fig. 49. Seated Buddha from Ratnagiri  
Jajpur.



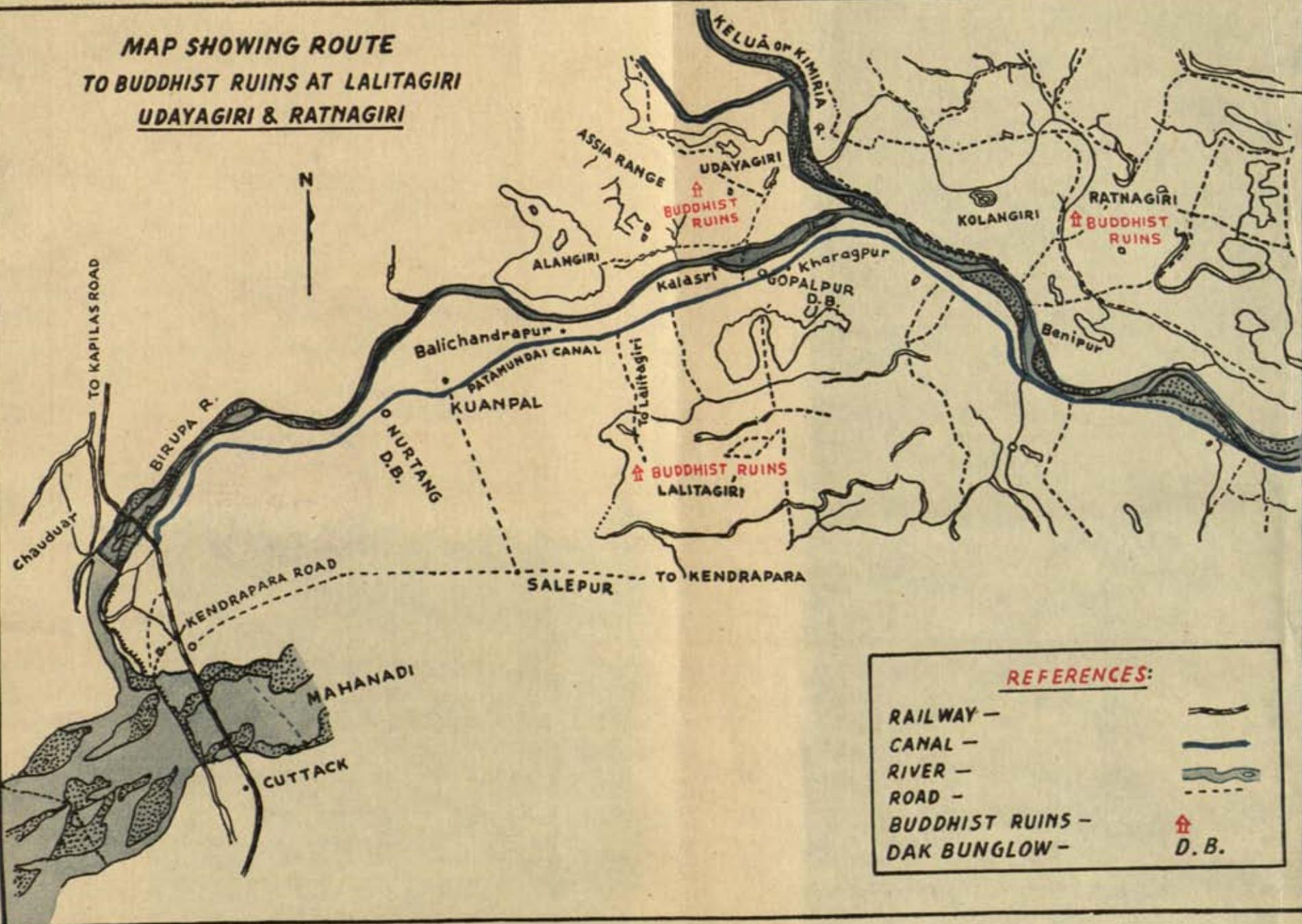
Fig. 50. Hon'ble U Nu at Lalitagiri.

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( Other Photographs are taken by R. M. Dutta,  
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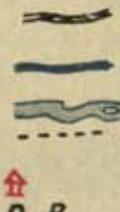
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MAP SHOWING ROUTE  
TO BUDDHIST RUINS AT LALITAGIRI  
UDAYAGIRI & RATNAGIRI



REFERENCES:

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CANAL —  
RIVER —  
ROAD —  
BUDDHIST RUINS —  
DAK BUNGLOW —



D.B.

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TO BUNDIST RUINS AT CUTTACK  
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